

THE PROMETHEUS TRILOGY

THE evidence against the Aeschylean authorship of the *Prometheus* is now overwhelming; or so it appears to me, considering the question without preconception and in that hebdomad of life in which, according to Solon, *περὶ πάντα καταρτύεται νόος ἀνδρός*. Those who still maintain that the play is by Aeschylus may probably be divided into three categories: those who have not read Mark Griffith's recent book on the subject;¹ those who are incapable of unlearning anything they grew up believing, at any rate concerning such an important matter; and those who, while not constitutionally incapable of conversion, nor unimpressed by the evidence, yet have a rooted feeling, which they are unwilling to discount, that the play is like Aeschylus. The first group is easy to prescribe for. The second is incurable. To the third I would say that although instinct may certainly on occasion be worth a hundred arguments, its reliability as a pointer to the truth depends on its sources. When it represents a rational calculation performed by the subconscious from considerations or observations of which the conscious mind has not yet taken stock, so that upon reflection it can be put on an objective basis, well and good. There is no doubt an element of such calculation in the present case, for of course the *Prometheus* does have some Aeschylean features. (So did the early plays of Sophocles, according to himself.) But who can boast a subconscious programmed with a concept of Aeschylean drama that is not based in part on the *Prometheus* itself? It is one of the first plays of the transmitted seven that the student reads; it is one liable to make a striking impression on him, and so to contribute more than its share to his concept of Aeschylus. He reads in handbooks about Aeschylus' love of spectacle and interest in theological problems, he finds these supposed characteristics exemplified nowhere more clearly than in the *Prometheus*, and he accordingly registers these aspects of the play as peculiarly Aeschylean. On such foundations the developing scholar builds up his concept of Aeschylus, and it is little wonder if, some decades later, he is unable to fight the conviction that the *Prometheus* is profoundly Aeschylean and that Aeschylus is incomplete without the *Prometheus*. But the time has come now to face the facts; to stop pretending that they are explained if Aeschylus wrote the play in Sicily, or when he was rather ill; and to construct a new, more homogeneous picture of the Father of Tragedy.

The purpose of this article is to reconsider the old but still unresolved problems of the staging of the extant *Prometheus*, to contribute to the reconstruction of the trilogy, and to advance arguments for dating it to the year 440 or shortly after.

It is generally accepted that the other plays of the trilogy were the *Prom. Lyomenos* and *Prom. Pyrphoros*, though opinion is sharply divided (and has been for over a century) on whether the latter was the third play or the first. There are good reasons for the belief that these three plays did form a trilogy. The scholiast on *PV* 511 states that Prometheus 'is released in the following play', and on 522 that he 'is keeping what he has to say for the next play'.² We know enough about the *Lyomenos* to see that it continued the story of Prometheus in exactly the way foreshadowed in the *Desmotēs* and in exactly the same style, with another chorus of sympathetic but ineffectual deities and with lengthy catalogues of remote peoples and places, partly in instruction of a passing wanderer from Greece. Heracles' route through the west complemented Io's through the east. Even in the few fragments quoted we observe some of those stylistic features whose frequency in the *Desmotēs* sets it apart from the work of Aeschylus,³ and some close parallels of diction. If ever two plays were composed together, these two were. We are bound to assume that there was a third.⁴ Among the plays ascribed to Aeschylus, *Prom. Pyrphoros* is virtually the only

¹ *The Authenticity of Prometheus Bound* (Cambridge 1977). See also O. Taplin, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* (Oxford 1977) 460–9.

² ἐν γὰρ τῷ ἐξῆς δράματι λύεται; τῷ ἐξῆς δράματι φυλάττει τοὺς λόγους. The suggestion that this could mean 'the next play' in some collected edition is absurd, particularly in view of the second passage. Ancient critics never refer to other plays in such a way.

³ Initial anapaest in the trimeter (Griffith 77 f.); irregular caesura in anapaests (Griffith 70 f.); address with the

bare proper name (Griffith 120 f.).

⁴ The hypothesis of a dilogy (Bernhardy, Dindorf, Bergk, Focke) cannot be supported by any solid parallel, so far as the Dionysia are concerned. It would be possible at the Lenaia, when it was the custom for tragic poets to exhibit two plays, though we do not know that these were ever connected in subject. This option is not available to those who maintain that *Desm.* is by Aeschylus, as tragic performances at the Lenaia only began c. 440.

candidate,⁵ and its title is certainly promising. Although next to nothing is recorded of its contents, we do know that it referred to Prometheus' bondage as being for *τρισημυρία ἔτη*, which links it with *PV* 94 *τὸν μυριετῆ χρόνον ἀθλεύσω*.⁶ The idea is not found in any other early treatment of the Prometheus myth, and it presupposes an account which embraces both the binding and the release—that is to say, where drama is concerned, a Prometheus trilogy.

Taplin has suggested that the titles of the plays indicate that they did not belong together in a trilogy.⁷ The argument runs: epiclases such as *Desmotes*, *Lyomenos*, were invented by Alexandrian scholars to distinguish between plays of the same name; the author's title would simply have been *Prometheus* in each case; but the author would not have given the same title to different plays within a trilogy. The first premise is unsound. In a number of cases, epiclases are obviously inspired by some striking *visual* feature of a particular scene: Ajax *μαστιγοφόρος*, Hippolytus *στεφανηφόρος* and *καλυπτόμενος*, and others. Such names will not have originated with scholars who knew the plays mainly from reading but with people who knew them as spectacles. They must have been current in the book trade long before the Alexandrians set to work. A man buying an *Ajax* needed to be sure which one it was: to be told that it was 'that one where Ajax appeared brandishing a whip' was just what he wanted. Such designations, like all book titles in the classical period, were initially informal and not exclusive. The same play might be called *Φρύγες* or *Ἔκτορος λύτρα*.⁸ There is no certainty that the plays of our trilogy were recorded in the *Didaskaliai* under 'Prometheus' titles: they might have been designated after their choruses, as so often happened. The greater importance of the virtuoso actor after the fifth century perhaps encouraged the use of protagonist-titles. But any of our plays might at any time have been referred to as a *Prometheus*, and whoever needed to distinguish between them could at any time attach the suitable epiclasis.

PROMETHEUS PYRPHOROS

The *Pyrphoros* was certainly the first play, not the third. The arguments used by Pohlenz nearly fifty years ago⁹ should have been accepted as conclusive.

(i) By the end of *Ly.* Prometheus was free and wearing the crown that commemorated his bondage and was subsequently worn by men in remembrance of it. This already establishes an aition for cult practice, something we would expect to come at the end of the trilogy. Those who place *Pyrph.* last assume that it had to do with the establishment of the Attic Promethia. But this cannot have required more than a few lines at the end of a play, and could very well have been dealt with in *Ly.* It is impossible to see how a whole further play could have been filled.

(ii) If *Pyrph.* came first, it dealt with Prometheus' theft of fire. The plan of the trilogy was then Crime—Punishment—Reconciliation. This, and not Punishment—Reconciliation—(?), is surely the scheme that would naturally have occurred to the poet.

(iii) The perfect tense in *Σ PV* 94 (= *fr.* 341 Mette), *ἐν γὰρ τῷ Πυρφόρῳ τρεῖς μυριάδας φησὶ δεδέσθαι αὐτόν*, used to be taken as an indication that *Pyrph.* came later than *Desm.* But in *fr.* 326 M what was actually a prophecy to Heracles, *ἤξεις δὲ Λιγύων εἰς ἀτάρβητον στρατόν κτλ.*, is turned by Hyginus into *Aeschylus autem in fabulá quae inscribitur Προμηθεὺς λύομενος Herculem ait . . . iter fecisse per Ligurum finés* etc. The scholiast may likewise be referring to a passage that was actually in the future tense. Indeed, this duration for the bondage could only be given at or before its beginning, since in fact Prometheus was released much sooner than Zeus anticipated, in the thirteenth human generation. Fifth-century writers were quite used to converting so many generations into so many hundred years.

It has often been argued that the fullness with which anterior events are related in *Desm.* makes it unlikely that another play preceded. But not all of these events need have fallen within the compass of *Pyrph.*; *Desm.* itself shows that the author was much given to repeating himself; and on

⁵ Against Lloyd-Jones's theory that it was the *Aitnaiai* see the just criticisms of Taplin 464 f.

⁶ There is no contradiction, since these are not meant as precise numbers. Cf. 257 f., 512.

⁷ *JHS* xciv (1975) 184–6.

⁸ See in general E. Nachmanson, *Der griechische Buchtitel* (Darmstadt 1969).

⁹ *Die griechische Tragödie*¹ 70 ff. = 2nd edn 77 f. Cf. A. D. Fitton-Brown, *JHS* lxxix (1959) 53; Griffith 15 f.

the other hand Prometheus is not explicitly identified in the opening scene till line 66, not as early as we might expect if he had not been seen before. An audience is not normally required to deduce the identity of a character from a statement of what he has done (7 f.), an address as indistinctive as *Θέμιδος αἰπυμῆτα παῖ* (18), or an assessment of the general situation.

Pyrph., then, was concerned with Prometheus' theft of fire and its transmission to mankind. He carried it in a fennel-stalk,¹⁰ and the play's epiclesis *πυρφόρος*, like Ajax *μαστιγοφόρος* and Hippolytus *στεφανηφόρος*, doubtless recalled a particular scene where he appeared with this property. There seems to be a reflection of it in *Birds* 1494 ff., where Prometheus appears veiled and furtive, afraid of being seen by Zeus, in a situation where no fires are burning on mortal altars (1516–18). His *μισῶ δ' ἅπαντας τοὺς θεούς, ὡς οἶσθα σύ* in 1547 (~ *PV* 975 *ἀπλῶ λόγῳ τοὺς πάντας ἐχθαίρω θεούς*) confirms the allusion to the Prometheus trilogy, which had been parodied by Aristophanes earlier¹¹ and by Cratinus before him.¹² It is difficult to account for the *Birds* scene without the tragic model.¹³

Prometheus appeared with the smouldering fennel, furtively, *λαθὼν Δία τερπικέραυνον* (Hes. *loc. cit.* n. 10), but visible to the chorus. Presumably he did not carry it away again to give to mankind off-stage, but gave it to mankind or to some intermediary in the course of the scene. It is natural to guess that he gave it to the chorus and that a small fire was kindled on the altar in the middle of the orchestra; it may then have been covered over with ashes. Cf. Hyg. *fab.* 144 (*ignem*) *Prometheus in ferulá detulit in terras hominibusque mónstrauit quomodo cinere obrutum seruarent.*¹⁴

Were the chorus then mortal men? Perhaps; but it does say in the Life of Aeschylus that his Prometheus plays *διὰ μόνων οἰκονομοῦνται θεῶν . . . τὰ δράματα συμπληροῦσιν οἱ πρεσβύτατοι τῶν θεῶν, καὶ ἔστι τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς σκηνῆς καὶ τῆς ὀρχήστρας θεῖα πάντα πρόσωπα*. Io at least is an exception; but a chorus of mortals would be a more flagrant one. I would suggest as a possibility that the chorus represented the tree-nymphs known as the Meliai. Hesiod said that following Prometheus' trick Zeus *οὐκ ἐδίδου μελίησι πυρὸς μένος ἀκαμάτιο* (*Th.* 563). A scholiast explains *μελίησι* as meaning men, because they were descended from the Meliai. Others may have understood it to mean the Meliai themselves, as those from whom men take fire, stored up in trees as it is (cf. my note on the passage). Our poet had Hesiod's account very much in mind, and might have had the idea of making the Meliai the intermediaries who received fire from Prometheus and from whom mankind would afterwards obtain it. If so, it becomes a little easier to understand how he came to think of making the Oceanids, nymphs of springs and groves, the chorus of the following play. The hypothesis also allows us to accommodate in *Pyrph.*, if we wish, Aesch. *fr.* 379 Nauck (*fab. inc.*),

*ὕμεις δὲ βωμόν τόνδε καὶ πυρὸς σέλας
κύκλω περίστητ' ἐν λόχῳ τ' ἀπίερονι
εὐξασθε,*

which we know from the Homeric scholiast who quotes it to have been addressed to a female chorus.¹⁵ Mette inserts it in his *fr.* 343 = P. Oxy. 2245 *fr.* 1, a Prometheus-play in which the chorus rejoices in the novelty of fire and is confident that it will attract Naiads. I agree with Fraenkel and

¹⁰ *PV* 109, after Hes. *Th.* 567, *Op.* 52; also on vases, perhaps after Aesch. *Prom. Pyrkaeus*.

¹¹ Griffith 11 f.; add *Ach.* 704 ~ *PV* 2.

¹² See below on *Ly.* Was any play of Aeschylus made so much use of by comedians?

¹³ Certain of the things Prometheus says in it might be echoes of the trilogy: 1500 *βουλῆτος ἢ περαιτέρω*; (*πέρα* and *περαιτέρω* three times in *Desm.*, not otherwise in Aeschylus); 1514 *ἀπόλωλεν ὁ Ζεὺς* (Prometheus might have said this to the Titans in *Ly.*, alluding to the disaster that awaited Zeus if he did not buy Prometheus' secret); 1538 *ἦπερ ταμειέει τὸν κεραυνὸν τοῦ Διός*. Zeus' thunderbolt may have been important in the trilogy as the foundation of his power, cf. *PV* 922. In *Eum.* 827 f. it is Athena who alone has access to the building where it is kept. In *Pl. Prot.* 321d it is from the house that she shares with

Hephaestus that Prometheus steals fire, though in *Desm.* we only hear of Hephaestus as its owner. Plato, at least, was thinking of the Periclean Hephaestum overlooking the agora, shared by Hephaestus and Athena.

¹⁴ The passage goes on to relate the nailing of Prometheus to the Caucasian rock for 30,000 years, the eagle, and its dispatch by Heracles. Another account, 'Probus' on Virg. *Ec.* vi 42, says 'fürem Iuppiter insequatur, sed ille, qui non posset subterfugere, in silicem ferulam adlisset eique ignem commendauit'.

¹⁵ The injunction to pray does not exclude the addressees' being divine themselves. Hera prays to Earth, Heaven and the Titans in *h. Hom. Ap.* 332 ff.; the Erinyes pray to their mother Night in *Eum.* 321 and 844 and to the Moirai in 961.

others that this is a satyric chorus, in which case the play will be Aeschylus' *Prometheus Pyrkaeus* of 472.¹⁶ But the scene is at least suggestive as a model for *Pyrph*.

In Hesiod the theft of fire followed its withdrawal by Zeus in response to the trick that Prometheus played on him at Mekone over the division of meat. It was itself followed by the creation of the first woman and her reception by Epimetheus. These matters are entirely ignored in *Desm.*, however, and we must take what we find there as our guide to the context of the theft in *Pyrph*. Prometheus relates (199 ff.) that when the younger gods began to rebel against the Titans, he, advised by his oracular mother Themis-Gaia,¹⁷ tried to persuade his brothers to resist them by craft, not with force. They would not listen to him, so he changed sides and helped Zeus to victory. Zeus banished Kronos and his allies to Tartarus, and assigned to the new gods their various privileges. For mortals he had no concern: he proposed to wipe them out and create a new race. Only Prometheus resisted, and he saved them from destruction, gave them hope of life in place of certainty of death, and fire from which they would develop many skills.¹⁸

It is doubtful whether all this could have been encompassed in a tragedy. If it was, the *Pyrphoros* must have moved at a tremendous pace, wholly unlike that of the Brucknerian *Desmotes*. I think it much more likely that it began with Zeus already in power, the Titans already in Tartarus, and mortal men floundering in misery, deprived of the easy life they had enjoyed in the reign of Kronos and unequipped for the realities of the new world. The first part of the play will have been devoted to the representation of this situation by means of choral songs, dialogue between Prometheus and the chorus, and perhaps dialogue of a less friendly sort between Prometheus and some representative of Zeus' regime. If the chorus consisted of the Meliai, their sympathy for mankind is understandable, because they could be considered the mothers of mankind, in accordance with those traditions which had men born from trees.¹⁹

Two fragments attributed to Aeschylus but not to a specific play might have stood here. One is 619 M,

αἰ δ' ἔπτ' Ἄτλαντος παῖδες ὀνομασμένοι
πατρός μέγιστον ἄθλον οὐρανοστευγῇ
κλαίεσκον, ἔνθα νυκτέρων φαντασμάτων
ἔχουσι μορφὰς ἄπτεροι πελειάδες.

The labour imposed on Atlas is twice referred to in sympathetic terms in *Desm.* (347 ff., 425 ff.), and Prometheus may have told the chorus about it in *Pyrph*. The other is 690, *Iouem ex sceleratorum genere eximit et ab iniústis léx*, i.e. Zeus can do by virtue of his position things for which anyone else would be called a criminal. That does not sound like genuine Aeschylus, but it might well represent an exchange between Prometheus and a Jovite:

How is Zeus not unrighteous, if he acts like this?
— He is not; the law exempts him from that name.

The theft of fire will have been preceded by a scene in which Prometheus obscurely intimated to the chorus that he intended to do something to alleviate man's lot. They will have questioned him wonderingly in a passage of stichomythia, but he probably did not reveal everything: this is the most likely context for fr. 351 M,

σιγῶν θ' ὅπου δεῖ καὶ λέγων τὰ καίρια,

especially in view of its immediate model, *Cho.* 582, where Orestes has been explaining his bold plan to the chorus. It is also a possible context for fr. 601 (*fab. inc.*),

ἀπάτης δικαίας οὐκ ἀποστατεῖ θεός.

¹⁶ E. Fraenkel, *Proc. Brit. Acad.* xxviii (1942) 245 ff.; Snell, *Gnomon* xxv (1953) 435 f.; Lloyd-Jones, appendix to the Loeb *Fragments of Aeschylus*, p. 562.

¹⁷ In the genuine Aeschylus, *Eum.* 3, Themis is the daughter of Ge and her successor as incumbent of the Delphic oracle.

¹⁸ Cf. 110. Later, in 442 ff., Prometheus speaks as if mankind has already acquired all its arts, directly taught by him. The poet's conception has clearly evolved

between the first passage and the second, and nothing of what is new in the second must be projected back into *Pyrph*. By 714 there are iron-working Chalybes.

It is doubtful what, if any, sense can be given to the statement in 331 that Oceanus shared and dared everything with Prometheus. He cannot have played any part in the theft of fire.

¹⁹ Hesiod may have considered them so. See my notes on *Th.* 187 and *Op.* 145-6.

That this verse came from the Prometheus trilogy is suggested by the following considerations:

1. It is a justification of some deception by a god, a justification presented presumably by himself. It does not look like a line from a longer speech (as of a *deus ex machina*) but a complete response to a query or reproach in stichomythia; addressed, moreover, to someone of less lofty status. There cannot have been many plays in which these circumstances arose.

2. Aeschylus knows that the gods deceive in the ultimate interest of justice, but the provocative, aphoristic formulation as an *ad hoc* self-justification reminds us more of Euripides and his time.

3. The initial anapaest is, as has been noticed, markedly more frequent in the Prometheus-poet than in the genuine Aeschylus.

Prometheus left the stage, and the chorus no doubt sang in a mood of anxious anticipation. Presently he returned with the fennel, the fire was lit on the altar, and after all due formalities had been attended to, the chorus sang again, joyfully, like the satyrs in the *Pyrrhaeus* papyrus, and like other tragic choruses who think that everything is turning out all right.

But the crime had been detected. What noisy god now entered to charge Prometheus with it, we cannot be sure; perhaps Hermes, who is introduced in *PV* 941 as if we had all seen him before. Hyginus in the passage cited above gives Mercury, not Vulcan, as the one who nailed Prometheus to the rock, and this could be the result of telescoping the proceedings at the close of *Pyrrh.* with those of the opening of *Desm.* At any rate we may be sure that a tense scene ensued between a defiant Prometheus and an indignant emissary of Zeus. There may have been an announcement of the further hardships now to be imposed on mankind through Pandora, *τοῦ πηλοπλάστου σπέρματος θνητῆ γυνή* (*fr.* 718 M). *Trag. adesp.* 352 N would fit well here:

εἴμαρμένον δὲ τῶν κακῶν βουλευμάτων
κακὰς ἀμοιβὰς ἔστι καρποῦσθαι βροτοῖς (-οὺς).

This was not a statement of a universal principle, as those who quote it understand: 'fated' implies a particular situation. A god is announcing how mankind is going to be punished.²⁰

What is more certain is that the scene culminated in the announcement of Prometheus' punishment. We know that Hephaestus was appointed to carry it out (*PV* 3-4). There is no need to suppose, however, that he was brought onto the stage for this purpose in *Pyrrh.* Prometheus was probably told 'you will be fastened to a rock with unbreakable shackles forged by Hephaestus; there you will stay ἔτη τρισμυρία' (*fr.* 341, *cf.* above);

χροιάν δὲ τὴν σὴν ἥλιος λάμπων φλογί
αἰγυπτιώσει.²¹

At the end Kratos and Bia may have been called forward as *κωφὰ πρόσωπα* to lead him away, for this seems the obvious way of bringing the exodos about. The chorus would follow after him as helpless sympathizers, lamenting his fate and man's and the harshness of Zeus.

It remains to consider where the action was supposed to take place. The divine drama hardly needs a definite locale, but it would be contrary to tragic practice not to specify one. Reinhardt thought that it would have had to be Olympus, if *Pyrrh.* was the first play in the trilogy, which he did not believe.²² That is surely the last place it could be. We want a place on earth associated with Prometheus or with the origin of fire. The Hesiodic Mekone meant little to the Athenians or to anyone else. One possibility is Academia outside Athens, where Prometheus was honoured with Hephaestus and Athena.²³ Its pleasant groves, a favourite resort from the city since Cimon's gardening works, would be appropriate for the Meliai. The strongest candidate, however, must be Lemnos, in view of Cic. *Tusc.* 23 *ueniat Aeschylus . . . Quo modo fert apud eum Prometheus dolorem quem excipit ob furtum Lémniium!* Cicero's testimony is not conclusive, for shortly afterwards he locates Prometheus' bondage in the Caucasus, and even imports the Caucasus into his translation

²⁰ I suspect that the gnomological tradition has substituted *εἴμαρμένον* for *πεπρωμένον* (*cf.* *PV* 103, 512, 518-19, 753, 815, *Ly. fr.* 326. 3) and *τῶν* for *σῶν*.

²¹ *Trag. adesp.* 161 N, *cf.* *PV* 22 f. *σταθευτὸς δ' ἡλίου φοῖβη φλογί / χροιάς ἀμείψεις ἄνθος*. The fragment can only be addressed to someone who is going to be kept

immobile in the open for a long period.

²² *Tradition und Geist* 210 n.

²³ R. Unterberger, *Der gefesselte Prometheus des Aeschylus* (1968) 134. She believes that *Pyrrh.* was the third play.

of the Titan's first speech in *Ly*. He has been conditioned to that by the mythographical vulgate,²⁴ and when he writes *fúrtum Lémniūm* he may not be thinking of *Pyrph.*, which is not the Aeschylus he wants to quote: he adorns the phrase with a quotation from Accius' *Philoctetes*, where Ulysses, pointing out the landmarks of Lemnos, referred to the shrine of Hephaestus on the mountain where fire first came from heaven,²⁵ and the grove where Prometheus shared it secretly with mortals. This is Cicero's immediate source. Accius may be recasting something from Aeschylus' *Philoctetes* or Euripides', but if so he has transferred it from a different context in the play. The grove he mentions would certainly do very well as the scene of *Pyrph.*, and the statements that Prometheus stole the fire from Hephaestus (*PV* 7, 38) suit Lemnos.

PROMETHEUS DESMOTES

On the left-hand side of the orchestra in the theatre of Dionysus there was at one time an outcrop of limestone which formed a natural eminence of some size, about 5 m across. At some stage in the theatre's development it was removed, but N. G. L. Hammond has made a good case for believing that it was still there in Aeschylus' time and that he sometimes made use of it to represent a hill or mound.²⁶ Taplin, *Stagecraft* 448 f., is inclined to accept this for the *Septem* and *Supplices*, but thinks that the rock was removed before the *Oresteia*, at the same time as the introduction of a stage set on the far side of the orchestra from the audience. But his argument is merely the negative one that the rock's only use in the *Oresteia* 'would be for the Areopagus in *Eum.*, and it seems implausible that the whole Areopagus should be represented by a small [*sic*] outcrop rather than left entirely to the imagination'. Because the trilogy could have been performed without a rock, it does not follow that the rock had been removed; and in fact, if Hammond is right in supposing that it served as Darius' grave-mound in the *Persae*,²⁷ then it could serve as well for Agamemnon's tomb in the *Choephoroe*,²⁸ and for the appearance of Clytaemestra's ghost in the *Eumenides*. The introduction of a stage set c. 460 in no way depended on, or made advisable, the removal of the rock—least of all if, as Taplin thinks (457), the diameter of the orchestra was simultaneously reduced, leaving the rock further out of the performers' way.

In the plays we have from the last third of the fifth century, rocks and hills are scarcely called for,²⁹ and tombs seem to be small altar-like structures.³⁰ We may conclude that the outcrop had gone at least by c. 430, for otherwise we cannot explain the persistent failure to make use of it, which is in such contrast with its almost constant appearance in Aeschylus. Its removal must surely be connected with the comprehensive reconstruction of the theatre undertaken in the Periclean period, which involved an enlargement of the *skene* area, the re-siting of the orchestra and *eisodoi*, and the re-contouring of the auditorium within new supporting walls.³¹ The date of these works is not known exactly, but they took account of the existence of the adjoining Odeum, which was finished by 443. It is curious that the Odeum cut into what one might have thought was established as the auditorium of the theatre. But perhaps that part of the *cavea*, the south-east

²⁴ As have Strabo iv 1.7 (*fr.* 326a M) and the writer of the *Desm.* Hypothesis, ἡ μὲν σκηνὴ τοῦ δράματος ὑπόκειται ἐν Σκυθίᾳ ἐπὶ τὸ Κανκάσιον ὄρος. It is clear from 422 and 719 that the scene is not the Caucasus. To suppose that Prometheus emerged from the rock's embrace (1019) in a completely different place, for the sake of absolving Cicero from his error, is the height of absurdity.

²⁵ Lightning struck a tree: Tz. Lyc. 227, cf. Hellan. 4 F 71, Diod. i 13.

²⁶ GRBS xiii (1972) 409 ff.

²⁷ *Op. cit.* 423, 428. Cf. especially *Pers.* 659 ἔλθ' ἐπ' ἄκρον κόρυμβον ὄχθου.

²⁸ 4 τύμβου δ' ἐπ' ὄχθω τῶδε. Hammond 436 f.

²⁹ The main exception is Andromeda's rock. Pirithous was also bound to a rock, but the *Pirithous* may have been composed before 430; at least if it is by Euripides, it belongs to his early work. The rocky peak from which

Evadne leaps in *Suppl.* 980–1071 rose up behind the *skene*; it is fully discussed by N. C. Hourmouziades, *Production and Imagination in Euripides* 32 f. Rocky caves in which people live (*Ichneutae*, *Cyclops*, *Philoctetes*, etc.) are essentially different; they were certainly represented by adapting the *skene*. On them see W. Jobst, *Die Höhle im griech. Theater* 24 ff.

³⁰ P. D. Arnott, *Greek Scenic Conventions* 61–3, 137. In Sophocles' *Polyxena* (*fr.* 523 + Long. 15. 7) Achilles' ghost apparently rose from his tomb; this may have been an early play.

³¹ Dörpfeld, *Ath. Mitt.* xlix (1924) 89; Pickard-Cambridge, *Theatre of Dionysus* 15 ff.; Hammond 410 f. It is now known that the newer temple of Dionysus behind the *Skene* area does not date from this period but from the fourth century: *Deltion* xviii (1963) *Χρον.* 14 f.

sector, was not used precisely because the view from there was blocked by the rock outcrop. See FIG. 1.

In *Prometheus Desmotes* and for a large part of *Lyomenos* the focus of attention is a rock, described as high and rugged, constantly called a *πάγος* (20, 117, 130, 270; so of the hill in *Supp.* 189), *πέτρα*, or *φάραγξ*. It was not imposed on the poet by the story, for in the Hesiodic version Prometheus is fastened to a pillar. Hammond (422 ff.) is surely right in assuming that the Titan was bound on the natural rock to the left of the orchestra and not, as is usually supposed, on an artificial construction in the centre of the *skene* area.

The play opens with the unusual spectacle of four actors entering together:³² Prometheus, held by Kratos and Bia, and Hephaestus carrying a hammer and a collection of shackles (54, 56). The prisoner is taken up onto the rock, which, as we can gather from other plays, is easily

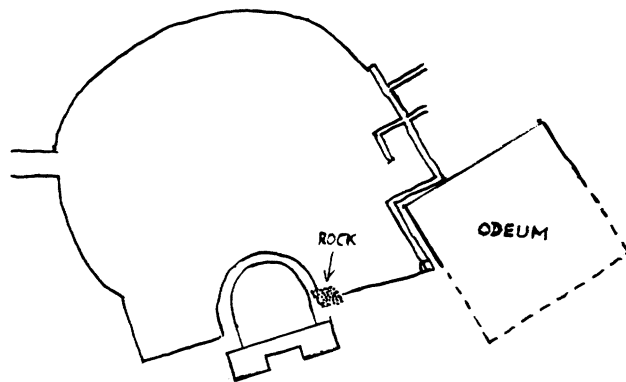


FIG. 1.

ascended from the orchestra.³³ The actual shackling is simulated, of course, because he has to be able to remove himself at the end, but it is simulated vividly, with ringing blows of metal against stone (133).

Hephaestus, Kratos, and Bia descend and depart. Prometheus' anapaests in 93–100 presumably accompany their exit; if they go by the east *eisodos*, they are soon out of sight behind the rock.

Presently the Oceanids arrive. How they arrive is one of the two great problems in the staging of the play. On a literal reading of the text (114–35 + 271–83), they come flying into view with a multitudinous flapping of wings that suggests a flock of birds. They are seated in a winged vehicle or vehicles, in which they remain aloft for some 150 lines. Prometheus then invites them to descend to earth, and they do so, stepping nimbly (*ἐλαφρῶ ποδί*) out of whatever they were sitting in. All kinds of explanations have been offered of the means by which these manoeuvres were represented: some ludicrous, some unworkable, some simply feeble. They may be divided as follows:

(i) Some think that there were no vehicles at all: the chorus danced in, miming flight, and the rest was left to the imagination.³⁴ There are two serious objections. Why are the Oceanids, nymphs of springs, represented as flying at all? It is not in their nature to fly, and other gods reach the place on foot without difficulty. The author's only motive for bringing them by air is to achieve a spectacular effect, and if they are in fact merely dancing, there is none.³⁵ And secondly, if they are not in actual vehicles (aloft or aground) at 271, why all the fuss about their now getting down out of them? Fictitious vehicles would have been far better forgotten.

(ii) Some think that they came in wheeled vehicles at ground level or on the roof of the *skene* or some other elevated platform.³⁶ It is difficult to conceive that any impression of flight could be so achieved, whether with a communal cattle-truck or a squadron of Bath chairs, or that the

³² Cf. Taplin, *Stagecraft* 240 f.

³³ Hammond 421.

³⁴ G. Thomson, *CQ* xxiii (1929) 160 f., and *Aeschylus: The Prometheus Bound* 142–4.

³⁵ Cf. Griffith 144, Taplin 259 f.

³⁶ E.g. Sikes and Willson, *Prometheus Vincitus of Aeschylus* xlvi; Focke, *Hermes* lxx (1930) 282 f.; Pickard-Cambridge 39; Unterberger 10; Webster, *Greek Theatre Production* 12; Arnott 76 f.; Hammond 424.

audience readily accepted the creaking of axles in place of the whirring of wings. What were the means of propulsion? 'Attendants who would be regarded by convention as non-existent' (Sikes-Willson)? Hardly convincing aviation. Hidden ropes and winches? Imagine how awkwardly they would move forward. As for the *skene* roof, it is doubtful whether there was one at this period substantial enough for dodgems, and if there was, its boards would add fearfully to the creaking and rumbling. Ancient wheels had no rubber tyres. And how were the vehicles concealed from the view of the spectators in the upper rows before the chorus's entry? The *skene* roof cannot have been more than about 8 ft high in Euripides' time,³⁷ whereas the auditorium went up about 85 ft higher. No alternative elevated track is conceivable in the theatre as we know it. That only leaves the ground; and does anyone really believe that the Oceanids were trundled (uphill) up the *eisodoi*, sat there like an invalids' outing for a quarter of an hour, and then dismounted to find places in an orchestra littered with abandoned transport?

(iii) Some think that they really were borne through the air by means of the *mechane*, either in one container³⁸ or in individual winged chairs of the pattern used by Triptolemos.³⁹ It will be granted that the last method would be visually satisfactory, if it could be carried out, and that it is really the only one that approaches being so.

The objections raised to both versions of the crane theory are on practical grounds.⁴⁰ On all other known occasions when the crane was used in drama, it carried not more than two persons, or one on a (model) horse or other animal. It must have been designed for tasks of that order, and we cannot believe that the same machine was capable of carrying an entire chorus, weighing with their vehicles a ton or more and occupying not less than 250 cu. ft of space. The Athenians did have building cranes that enabled them to raise stone blocks of up to 12 tons or more to the top of an edifice.⁴¹ But the theatre crane probably had little in common with those. It had not only to lift a man but to move him easily up, down or sideways as required. It was worked by a single operator,⁴² and appears to have functioned in the manner of the *κηλώνειον*, consisting basically of a counterweighted boom on an altazimuth mounting.⁴³ It was probably no larger than it needed to be to swing its load up over the *skene* façade, which seems to have been not much above the height of a door. For a whole chorus a far larger machine would have had to be built, and it is doubtful whether it would have been operable.

A more plausible solution to the problem is to suppose that several cranes were used. Six would certainly suffice for a chorus of twelve;⁴⁴ possibly four, if each were made to bear three cars and passengers. We have no evidence for more than one crane being used on other occasions, true; but then we have no other text that calls for a chorus to fly.⁴⁵ Staging *Desm.* was by any account a uniquely ambitious and expensive undertaking. There is, moreover, a practical reason why cranes could not proliferate in the period after c. 435, in which most of our plays fall: a large part of the width of the stage was occupied by a permanent roofed building. The *mechane* was confined to a screened but unroofed area at the side.⁴⁶ Earlier, from the time of its first use c. 460, the *skene* had probably been what its name suggests, a light temporary structure erected anew for each festival and easily removable for a play set in desert regions.

³⁷ Arnott 43.

³⁸ A surprisingly popular option: Wilamowitz, *Hermes* xxi (1886) 610=Kl. Schr. i 161, *Aisch. Int.* 116, Headlam, Smyth, Mazon, Groeneboom, and others.

³⁹ E. Fraenkel, *Kl. Beitr.* i 389 ff.

⁴⁰ Sikes-Willson xlvi, Pickard-Cambridge 39, Arnott 76, Taplin 254, Hammond 424, etc.

⁴¹ See J. J. Coulton, *JHS* xciv (1974) 1-19, and *Greek Architects at Work* 84, 144.

⁴² Ar. *Pax* 174, fr. 188; Ar. and Strattis in P. Oxy. 2742 fr. 1.

⁴³ See P. Oxy. *loc. cit.*, Poll. iv 128, 131; Pickard-Cambridge 127 f.; Arnott 72-5. I am not sure whether the *τροχός* which the operator may *ἔλάν ἀνεκός* in Ar. fr. 188 is a winch enabling the actor to be lowered from the boom, or simply the counterweight with which the operator guides the machine.

⁴⁴ The argument is not greatly affected if the chorus

was of fifteen. Taplin 323 n. 3 suspects that the tragic chorus always numbered fifteen. As he observes, the ancient statements that Sophocles increased it from twelve to fifteen may be based solely on the belief that *Ag.* 1348-71 implies a chorus of twelve. But to me that belief seems justified (cf. Fraenkel's edn, iii 633-5; Pickard-Cambridge, *Dramatic Festivals of Athens*² 235). What we lack is any equally good evidence from the plays that the chorus ever numbered fifteen. Presumably it did attain that size before the end of the fifth century, for it is not likely to have been increased at any later date in view of the chorus's declining significance. But a later writer may have ascribed the change to Sophocles simply because he came next after Aeschylus, for whom twelve was attested.

⁴⁵ Not even *Clouds* or *Birds*.

⁴⁶ On the left, if Poll. iv 128 may be taken as evidence for this period.

On the other hand there would be difficulties in staging *Desm.* in the way I have suggested if we take it back to the time of Aeschylus; when the width of the stage was not more than about 18 m.⁴⁷ A crane carrying two riders would require, I reckon, some 4 m clear working space, given that both ends of the boom have to move in a lateral arc. For three riders one would have to allow more. For the operation to be carried out without severe congestion, we need the enlarged stage of the Periclean theatre, laid out to the same width as the Parthenon stylobate, 100 Attic feet = 30.89 m.⁴⁸

Here, then, is an important consideration bearing on the date of the trilogy. The text of *Desm.* indicates, as clearly as we could wish, that the Oceanids were intended to enter flying. The only feasible and effective way of achieving this presupposes a stage which has been widened but not yet built over. The rock beside the orchestra has not yet been removed; the east *eisodos* has to skirt it. It follows that the *Prometheus* and its companion plays could only have been conceived and produced at a certain fairly short transitional period in the development of the Theatre of Dionysus, say between c. 445 and c. 435.

Beyond Prometheus' rock, then, I suppose the audience to see a new stage, 100 ft wide, across which run two wooden screens, some 2 m high, on either side of a central gap. Above the screens, which are painted to suggest mountainous scenery, the tops of several cranes inevitably project, possibly camouflaged with branches. As Prometheus exclaims ἀ ἀ ἔα ἔα, and breaks into his unforgettable snatch of song (if it is song),

τίς ἀχώ, τίς ὀδμὰ προσέπτα μ' ἀφεγγής;

the Oceanids start to rise into view, sitting barefooted in their winged thrones which sway and hover like a flight of birds just in front of the screens. The astonished spectator surmises that this must be the chorus, and receives confirmation when they begin to sing. But they remain hanging in mid-air throughout the ensuing scene (in which Prometheus' singing voice is tested no more). See FIG. 2.

At 271 the poet decides that it is time to bring them to earth, and he makes Prometheus persuade them to descend so that they may hear about his future prospects. ἀκούσατε, he says, as if about to reveal all. They are willing; they desire to hear the whole story. Their vehicles sink low enough for them to step down.⁴⁹ But instead of the entertainment they have been promised, their father Oceanus suddenly barges forth over the fence on a griffin, and the next 113 lines are devoted to dialogue between him and Prometheus uninterrupted by a word from the chorus. They then sing an ode as if nothing had happened, after which they do hear Prometheus' story—all he did for men, and the first hints of what is to come. Not surprisingly, the Oceanus scene has been suspected of being an insertion.⁵⁰ I think there is no real doubt that it was composed by the same poet as the rest. It has all his trademarks, some of them in abnormal measure. On the other hand it seems safe to say that when he composed 271–83 he was not planning this as the immediate sequel. The chorus would still have had to land if he had been, to free a crane for Oceanus' use, but some different reason would have been provided. As it is, the poet must have had a prior motive for bringing them down when he does. The obvious one is so that they can dance—as they do the moment Oceanus departs. They sing *inter alia* of Atlas, who is introduced (425 ff.) as if we had not already heard about him from Prometheus in the Oceanus scene (347–50). The stasimon as a whole would stand satisfactorily after 283. The silence for which Prometheus apologizes in 436 is his delay in continuing after his promise in 271–6: his intervening dialogue with Oceanus obscures the connexion, just as it disrupts the whole sequence of action. The poet inserted it presumably because he found that his play was turning out too short or that the plot was advancing too rapidly. It is hastily written, dramatically weak and repetitious, inflated by the irrelevant digression on Atlas and Typhoeus (for whose sufferings Prometheus was not responsible), and in the end ludicrous; no wonder the griffin becomes impatient. The chorus

⁴⁷ Hammond 414.

⁴⁸ I infer this from the post-holes in the breccia base, originally ten in number, which held the support posts of the *skene* façade: they extend over a distance of 28.5 m.

⁴⁹ The crane operators perhaps lift the counterweights

up onto supports, so as not to be suddenly supporting them themselves, and then unhook them and swing the booms back.

⁵⁰ Wilhelm Schmid, *Untersuchungen zum gefesselten Prometheus* 5–15.

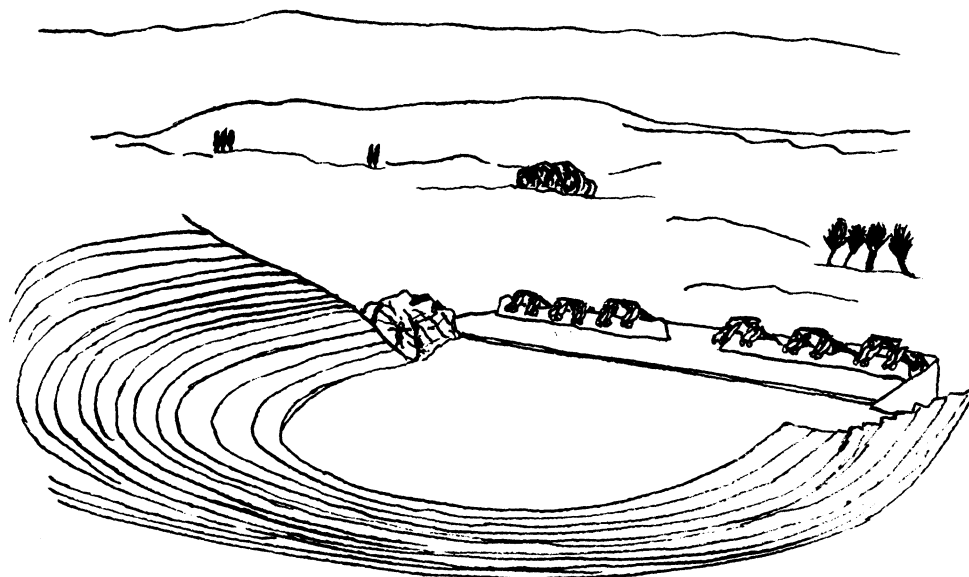


FIG. 2.

are silent throughout not because they have temporarily disappeared⁵¹ but because the poet has entirely neglected to harmonize the scene with its context. Having decided to add it, he has let his mind run exclusively on what Oceanus might say to Prometheus and Prometheus to Oceanus.⁵²

Oceanus' griffin (as the scholiast convincingly interprets the 'four-legged bird') is, like his daughters' winged chairs, gratuitous spectacle. Rider and mount were carried by the crane, as were Bellerophon and Pegasus in Euripides' *Bellerophon* and *Stheneboia* (both early plays) and Trygaeus and his giant beetle in Aristophanes' *Peace*. Their combined weight may have approached that of a pair of Oceanids, so that the same counterweight could be used. But the operator and the Oceanids concerned would have had to work very fast at 277–83 to enable Oceanus to appear without an awkward delay—a further embarrassment caused by the insertion.⁵³

We may now pass to the closing scene and the problem of what happens to the various people present. I agree with Taplin (269 f.) and most commentators that Hermes stalks off at 1079. The question is what becomes of Prometheus and the chorus. The indications given in the text may be summed up as follows:

1016–21 (Hermes) Zeus will shatter the rock with thunder and lightning, and Prometheus will be concealed inside it for a lengthy period.

1043–52 (Prom.) Let him employ thunder, lightning, furious winds, shake the earth from its foundations, confound sea and sky, and throw me into darkest Tartarus.

1060–79 (Hermes) Anyone who stays here will hear terrifying thunderclaps and be in danger of disaster. (Cho.) We shall stay nevertheless.

1080–8 Now there really is an earthquake, thunder, lightning, dust-laden whirlwinds; sky and sea are confused.

Not all of these phenomena could be simulated in the theatre, but thunder and lightning could be and no doubt were. The impious Salmoneus' methods, dragging cauldrons and inflated skins

⁵¹ Against this theory of Wilamowitz and others see Taplin 256 f. In 281 *χθονὶ τῆδε πελώ* they tell us as clearly as could be wished that they are alighting on the ground in full view of everyone.

⁵² He does not in fact give the chorus much to say in the later scenes with Io and Hermes.

⁵³ The manoeuvre could perhaps have been speeded up a little by using Oceanus as the counterweight to a pair of

his daughters. A couple of stage-hands would have to hoist him up on their shoulders when the Oceanids dismounted and then bear him round towards the fence; two others would seize the free end of the boom as soon as it came within reach and haul it down, and Oceanus would be up and away. All this may of course be far from the truth, but it is important to discuss these questions in the most concrete practical terms.

behind his chariot and hurling torches into the air, are already known to pseudo-Hesiod and alluded to by Sophocles.⁵⁴ There is evidence for mechanical thunder and lightning at least in the later theatre,⁵⁵ and we may be sure that even if they had never been used before, an author so given to spectacular effects as the poet of *Desm.* would not have left them to the imagination at the climax of his play.⁵⁶

Did they just die away after Prometheus' last words, while he and the chorus remained in full view waiting for someone to start applauding? That would be a dreadful anticlimax, besides being 'unparalleled in the stage technique of Greek tragedy since it would be the only exit or entry which is actually left to the imagination' (Taplin 274). The chorus have been offered a good excuse for leaving, in keeping with their timorous nature, and they have unexpectedly declined the opportunity. The poet must have thought of an alternative means of exit for them, as unconventional as their entrance. As for Prometheus, the whole notion of his being concealed in the rock for a time has no point unless it corresponds to an actual vanishing act at the end of the play and his absence during the interval before *Ly.* But was there a way of vanishing from the rock beside the orchestra? If we are right about its use by Darius and Clytaemestra in Aeschylus, there was. For those royal ghosts were able to rise up out of the earth without having been seen to arrive, and disappear back into it.⁵⁷ This suggests that there was some kind of concealed approach to the top of the rock from the *eisodos* behind. Geologically this is plausible. Limestone tends to weather into steps on the scarp side; the stratification in the area would indicate that this was the north-east side of the rock, which agrees most satisfactorily with the evidence that it was easily ascended from the orchestra (west) side. So there might have been a natural staircase on the east face. Alternatively there might have been a fissure on the south side, as the joints in limestone are commonly widened and deepened by chemical solution.⁵⁸ If something of the sort existed, all that was necessary was for the chorus to go up onto the rock sometime after 1063 (as the Danaids had done in *Supplices*) and cluster round Prometheus, hiding him from view: he would then make his escape, delivering his last words as he went, and they would rapidly follow him out of sight amid the final thunderclaps.

PROMETHEUS LYOMENOS

Centuries have passed. Prometheus' temporary entombment is forgotten; he resumes his place on the rock-face for the beginning of the third play.⁵⁹ His appearance is perhaps somewhat changed. Emphatic predictions (above p. 134) have prepared us for a darkening of his skin.⁶⁰ Also he should have a wound where the eagle attacks him.

The Titans come tramping up the *eisodos*.

ἤκομεν . . .
τοὺς σοὺς ἄθλους τούσδε Προμηθεῦ
δεσμοῦ τε πάθος τόδ' ἐποιόμενοι.⁶¹

The anapaests went on with a catalogue of the places they had passed on their way (*fr.* 322–3, 331 M). It included Aethiopian territory by the Ocean where the sun sets, the Red Sea, the warlike

⁵⁴ [Hes.] *fr.* 30. 4–10, *cf.* Apollod. i 9. 7; Soph. *fr.* 10c. 6, and probably his *Salmones*.

⁵⁵ Σ *Ar. Nub.* 294, Poll. iv 130, Tz. *prol. de com.* 33 p. 22 Kaibel; Haigh, *The Attic Theatre*³ 218; Pickard-Cambridge, *Theatre of Dionysus* 133; Arnott 89 f.

⁵⁶ Scholars are perhaps at present too taken with the idea of effects being left to the imagination in ancient drama. One has only to read the plays of Kālidāsa to appreciate the difference between drama which limits itself to what it is possible to represent visually, as the Greek does, and drama which does not, as the prop-less, scenery-less Sanskrit does not. And we know, for example, that when someone was supposed to be flying in a Greek play, he was really hoisted through the air.

⁵⁷ *Cf.* Hammond 423.

⁵⁸ I am indebted to Dr David Bell of the Oxford Department of Geology and Mineralogy for instruction in these matters.

⁵⁹ Convention allowed characters to walk in at the start of a play and take up a position which for the purposes of the drama they were supposed to have been in for a considerable time. See Taplin 134–6.

⁶⁰ Merely a dramatic device to underline the lapse of time, or did his complexion have to be brought into accord with a statue familiar to the Athenians? A potter's god might have a scorched and sooty face; *cf.* Hom. *Kaminos* 22 f. with G. M. Richter, *The Craft of Athenian Pottery* 76 f.

⁶¹ *Fr.* 322. *Cf.* PV i ἤκομεν, 284 f. ἤκω . . . πρὸς σέ Προμηθεῦ, 298 f. καὶ σὺ δὴ πόνων ἐμῶν / ἤκεις ἐπόπτῃς;

Heniochi of the Caucasus, and the Phasis, which the poet regards as the boundary of Europe and Asia and therefore locates at the Crimea.⁶² Roughly speaking, then, the Titans have followed in reverse the route laid down for Io, traversing Africa and Asia before reaching Europe from the east. Where was their starting-point? We must assume that since their release from Tartarus they have been settled in the Isles of the Blest.⁶³ It looks as if the poet located these off the west coast of Africa, in the Canaries, as did some later writers.⁶⁴

They probably commented on Prometheus' shrivelled and decayed appearance. This is suggested by the echo in Cratinus' *Ploutoi*, PSI 1212=fr. 73 Austin, where the chorus describe themselves as Titans who, now that their bondage is over and the tyrant Zeus overborne by the Demos,⁶⁵

δεῦρ' ἐσύθημεν πρὸς ο .[
αὐτοκασίγνητόν τε παλαιὸν
ζητούντε[s] ἐκεῖ σαθρὸν ἦδη.

If P. Heidelberg 185 (=fr. 323a M) is rightly assigned to *Ly.* and to its first scene, the Titans' emotion boiled up into dochmiacs before Prometheus addressed them. But there are serious difficulties in the identification.⁶⁶

Prometheus' speech, known from Cicero's translation (fr. 324), must have been followed by further dialogue before anyone else entered. *Trag. adesp.* 342 N,

ἐλαφρόν παραινεῖν <τῶ> κακῶς πεπραγότι,

might belong here in view of its similarity to *PV* 263 ff. (Prometheus to the Oceanids),

ἐλαφρόν, ὅστις πημάτων ἔξω πόδα
ἔχει, παραινεῖν νουθετεῖν τε τοὺς κακῶς
πράσσοντας.

We have noted before this poet's habit of repeating himself,⁶⁷ and also his weakness for initial anapaests.

It is commonly assumed that the next person to make an appearance was Ge, perhaps rising out of the earth to waist level.⁶⁸ The belief that she had a role in the play is based on the list of characters preceding the text of *Desm.*, for in most manuscripts it includes Ge and Heracles in addition to the characters who actually occur in that play, and Heracles certainly had a part in *Ly.* It is accordingly supposed that a fragment from a *dramatis personae* for *Ly.* has somehow become conflated with that for *Desm.* This explanation seems never to have been questioned,⁶⁹ yet no convincing reason has been given for believing that the *dramatis personae* of different plays were in any circumstances written out side by side. There is at least one possible alternative explanation that ought to be borne in mind. Whoever compiled the list presumably did so by running his eye

⁶² Cf. *PV* 730–5 and 790; J. D. P. Bolton, *Aristeas of Proconnesus* 56 f. πῆ μὲν is suspect in fr. 322 (τῆ μὲν, ἐπὶ μὲν have been conjectured); perhaps Arrian took ἐπήμην from an earlier metron. The Titans must have crossed the river to reach Prometheus on the European side.

⁶³ H. Weil, p. xi of his edition of the play; Wilamowitz, *Aisch. Int.* 151. See Hes. *Op.* 173a–c, *Pind. Ol.* ii 70 ff. For the genuine Aeschylus (*Eum.* 650–5) Kronos is still in bondage.

⁶⁴ Str. i 1.5, iii 2.13, *Mela* iii. 10, *Juba* 275 F 44, *Ptol.* iv 6.34.

⁶⁵ There seems a clear allusion here to Pericles' deposition from the strategía. *Lenaia* 429 follows as the probable date for the *Ploutoi*. So W. Luppe, *Wiss. Zeits. d. Martin-Luther-Univ. Halle-Wittenberg* xvi (1967) *Gesellsch. u. Sprachw. Reihe*, i. 68, 83. A series of fragments of Varro's *Prometheus Liber* come from a passage in which the bound Titan described his sufferings in terms no doubt largely inspired by Aeschylus (423–7 Buecheler); they include (424) *tum ut si subernus cortex aut cacumina | morientum in*

querqueto arborum áritudine, (425) *atque ex artubus | exsanguiibus dolore euírescat colós*, (427) *leuis méns umquam somnurnas imagines | affatur, non umbrantur somno púpulae*.

⁶⁶ Reinhardt, *Hermes* lxxxv (1957) 12 ff. and *Eranos-Jb* xxv (1957), both in his *Tradition und Geist* (182 ff., 221). Reinhardt assigns the fragment to *Pyrph.*, but his reconstruction of it is altogether too hypothetical.

⁶⁷ See W. Schmid, *op. cit.* 9–11 and 69.

⁶⁸ This hypothesis apparently inspired the similar epiphany of Erda in *Das Rheingold* (P. Maas, *Kl. Schr.* 650). An Apulian calyx-crater of about the third quarter of the fourth century, decorated with a painting based on *Ly.* (the play as a whole, not any particular scene), shows a featureless female to the right of the bound Prometheus, but her identification as Ge seems to be arbitrary. (Berlin 1969. 9; Webster–Trendall, *Illustrations of Greek Drama* iii 1. 27.)

⁶⁹ Wilamowitz, *Aisch. Int.* 128, is evidently none too happy with it, but finds no better one.

down the margins of the text he was concerned with and collecting the names that marked characters entering. He might easily include by mistake a name that had been written in the margin for a different reason. There happens to be in *Desm.* a place where both *Γῆ* and *Ἡρακλῆς* might have been written in the margin in close proximity as glosses: 871–4,

σπορᾶς γε μὴν ἐκ τῆσδε φύσεται θρασύς,
τόξοισι κλεινός, ὅς πόνων ἐκ τῶνδ' ἐμέ
λύσει· τοιόνδε χρησμὸν ἢ παλαιγενῆς
μήτηρ ἐμοὶ διήλθε Τιτανὶς Θέμις.

If this is the source of their appearance in the cast-list, we should expect them to come between Io and Hermes. In fact Io is out of sequence (as is Prometheus), but Ge and Heracles do appear in the predicted place before Hermes. The evidence for an appearance of Ge in *Ly.*, then, is at best doubtful. She is certainly not required to advance the plot, since Prometheus has already received all the instruction he needs from her before *Desm.* begins. I am much more inclined to believe that his first visitor after the Titans—following a choral song by them—was Heracles.

Heracles, like Io, is a wanderer who arrives at Prometheus' rock by chance. He is on his way to Geryones (*fr.* 326bc) or, according to Posidonius, to the Hesperides (326a). Prometheus will give him directions, as before he gave them to Io. But the scene contained other business of more relevance to Prometheus. The eagle, whose attacks every second day had been described by him to the chorus (*fr.* 324, cf. *PV* 1021–5), made its appearance on one of the cranes and was shot down by Heracles in full view of the audience⁷⁰—the only killing in tragedy to take place on stage, though Artemis in Sophocles' *Niobe* was seen above the house shooting arrows into it. And Hermes' statement in *PV* 1026–9, that Prometheus' suffering would not end

πρὶν ἂν θεῶν τις διάδοχος τῶν σῶν πόνων
φανῆ θελήσῃ τ' εἰς ἀναύγητον μολεῖν
"Αἰδην κνεφαῖά τ' ἀμφὶ Ταρτάρου βάθῃ,

found fulfilment. The god, according to the only known version of the story, was Chiron, whom Heracles had accidentally wounded in the fray that followed Pholos' drinking party and who chose to give up his immortality to Prometheus and die rather than live in incurable pain.⁷¹ After shooting the eagle, we are told in that version, Heracles παρέσχε τῷ Διὶ Χείρωνα θνήσκειν ἀθάνατον <ὄντα> ἀντ' αὐτοῦ θέλοντα.⁷² Heracles was indeed the only possible intermediary between Chiron and the bound Prometheus. According to Stesichorus, Heracles was entertained by Pholos while on his way to Geryones.⁷³ Our poet, then, or his source for the Chiron story, could represent Heracles as having wounded Chiron earlier on the same journey that brought him to Prometheus. Knowing of the Centaur's desire to die, and learning of Prometheus' need of just such a sacrifice, he could then assure the Titan that this requirement of Zeus' was fulfilled; perhaps also that he, being Zeus' son, knew that his father would accept the arrangement as made by him.⁷⁴

Did Heracles himself release Prometheus from the rock? 'Probus' on Virg. *Ec.* vi 42, in a version of the myth that is based in outline on the trilogy but departs from it in detail, says that Heracles killed the vulture (*sic*) but was afraid to free Prometheus, *ne offenderet patrem*. Prometheus subsequently warned Jupiter against the union with Thetis, and Jupiter in gratitude released him.

⁷⁰ This is certain in view of *fr.* 332, where Heracles, μέλλων ἐπὶ τὸν ὄρνιν αἶρεσθαι τὸ τόξον, prays that Apollo may guide the arrow straight. Rightly Reinhardt, *Trad. u. Geist* 219.

⁷¹ Apollod. ii 5.4.4–5, 5.11.10, from Pherecydes, cf. 3 F 83 with Jacoby.

⁷² ii 5.11.10. The Vatican epitome omits ἀθάνατον. In ii 5.4.5 we should read ἀντιδότος Διὶ Ἡρακλέως (instead of Προμηθέως) τὸν ἀντ' αὐτοῦ (sc. Χείρωνος) γενησόμενον ἀθάνατον. Prometheus intruded from a gloss on τὸν-ἀθ.

⁷³ PMG 181 = S 19; surely not on his way back, when he had a herd of cattle to manage.

⁷⁴ Weil, *Études sur le drame antique* 78, 80, followed by

Zieliński, *Tragodumenon libri tres* 34 ff., pointed out that the Chiron story properly belongs to a version where Prometheus is punished in Hades–Tartarus (Hor. C. ii 13.37, 18.35) and does not make much sense in one where he is punished in the upper world. One can envisage Heracles' mediation in the context of the Cerberus Labour: he could as well converse with the bound Prometheus in Hades as with the bound Pirithous in the play of that name. Our tragedian knows something about Prometheus being consigned to Hades, but makes this a dramatic interlude (in more senses than one); above p. 140.

Hyginus *fab.* 54 puts it the other way round: Prometheus agreed to reveal his secret if Jupiter released him, Jupiter promised, Prometheus spoke, and Thetis was given to Peleus; Hercules was sent to kill the eagle, after which Prometheus was released. Philodemus, π. εὐσεβείας p. 41 G, explicitly ascribes to Aeschylus (=fr. 321 M) the proposition that Prometheus was freed ὄ[τι τὸ λ]όγιον ἐμή[νυσεν]ν τὸ περὶ Θέ[τιδος]ς κτλ. But these accounts conflict with the clear programme presupposed by repeated statements in *Desm.*: Prometheus will not reveal the secret about Thetis until he has been released and offered compensation (172–7, 770, 989–91); and he will be released by Heracles (771–4, 785, 871–3; cf. 27).⁷⁵ It is implied that the release takes place with Zeus' consent (176, 375–6).⁷⁶ These data constitute our most reliable evidence for the course of events in *Ly.*, and it is not wise to reject them on the strength of summary statements and renarrations in later sources. In fact, by allowing Heracles to free Prometheus the dramatist can avoid an awkward dilemma, for otherwise either Prometheus must abandon his four-hundred-year-old resolve and spill his secret before being released, or Zeus must capitulate to the Titan.

The sequence of events from Heracles' arrival to his departure may have been something like this:

Prometheus hails his destined liberator; Heracles learns the situation (including the danger his father is in), and expresses his concern.

The eagle appears and is shot.

Heracles offers to release Prometheus altogether on condition that he reveals the secret to Zeus, but is told that Prometheus cannot become free to live the life of an immortal until another immortal opts for death. He explains that he knows such a one. Prometheus promises to save Zeus. Mounting the rock, Heracles applies his club to the shackles with two or three resounding blows (punctuated by trimeters), and they fall away.⁷⁷

Short choral song of the sort that may be sung while characters remain on stage.

Prometheus gives Heracles directions for the continuation of his travels, and he leaves.⁷⁸

Stasimon.

As has been mentioned, Heracles' destination is given both as Geryones and as the Hesperides. Both may be correct, for although some fifth-century accounts separated the two localities, the older authorities placed the Hesperides' island near Erytheia. It belonged indeed to the same story, being the birthplace of Geryones' herdsman Eurytion; golden apples grew there, but there seems originally to have been no question of Heracles' taking them.⁷⁹ That developed subsequently as a separate Labour, requiring a separate journey. The Prometheus poet kept Geryones and the Hesperides together. Whether both represented Labours is uncertain, but the discrepancy between the sources in fr. 326 suggests at least that they were both mentioned with some emphasis. The conventional (Stesichorean) Iberian location was retained, for Heracles' route, as Prometheus described it to him, was to take him through the nomad Scyths and Abioi (328–9),⁸⁰ across the Ister (330),⁸¹ and through Ligyan territory (326).⁸²

Chiron's desire to die might have prompted the remark (fr. 706, *fab. inc.*) ὡς οὐ δικάως θάνατον ἐχθουσιν βροτοί, / ὄπερ μέγιστον ῥύμα τῶν πολλῶν κακῶν.

⁷⁵ Heracles releases him also in Apollod. ii 5.11.10 (Pherecydes? but Σ A.R. iv 1396=3 F 17 mentions only shooting the eagle), Hyg. *Fab.* 144, Peditasimus 11.

⁷⁶ 771 ἄκοντος Διός (ἄρχοντος Pauw) is not to be taken as counter-evidence. As Weil explained (*op. cit.* 91), it means 'if' (or 'seeing that') Zeus is unwilling.

⁷⁷ They must be broken either by strength or by art; if not by Heracles, then by Hephaestus who made them. So Schmid 100.

⁷⁸ In this context one might put fr. 625 τῷ πονοῦντι δ' ἐκ θεῶν / ὀφείλεται τέκνωμα τοῦ πόνου κλέος and *adesp.* 410 N πολλοῦ σε θνητοῖς ἄξιον τίκει πατήρ. / καὶ μή τι παυσώμεσθα δρώντες εἰς βροτούς (the two verses are not to be separated, for the first would not have been quoted for its own sake; the addressee is surely Heracles, and the speaker another philanthropic god).

⁷⁹ Hes. *Th.* 215 f., 274–94, 333–6, 517–9; Stes. S 7–8

with C. M. Robertson, *CQ* xix (1969) 215 f. Hesiod evidently knew an eighth-century epic on the subject. He represents the serpent who guards the apples as alive and well (336), whereas later authors say Heracles slew it.

⁸⁰ It is hard to see why the poet should have changed the Homeric Abioi (*Il.* xiii 6) into Γάβιοι (329. 3), as Σ Hom. *l.c.* and Stephanus of Byzantium assert. Possibly the originator of this statement mistakenly combined the word, which begins a trimeter, with a stichometric symbol; Ἰ (300) would be a surprisingly low figure, but one could also think of Ἰ (900).

⁸¹ Conceived to flow down from the Rhipaeian mountains and divide into the Danube and Po. In Σ A.R. iv 282–91b (p. 280. 8–10 W) read καὶ τὸ μὲν {εἰς τὴν καθ' ἡμᾶς θάλασσαν ἐκβάλλειν ῥεῖθρον, τὸ δὲ} εἰς τὴν Ποντικὴν θάλασσαν ἐκπίπτειν, τὸ δὲ εἰς τὸν Ἀδριατικὸν κόλπον. Cf. p. 281. 9–12.

⁸² Hyginus says that the Ligyans were encountered on the return journey, and that they tried to rob Heracles of Geryones' cattle. But at least the second part of this is an

If Heracles leaves Prometheus free, how is the sequel to be imagined? How and why is Zeus warned about Thetis? Even if Prometheus has promised to tell him, a plausible setting for the revelation is needed. Nothing has happened to make Prometheus feel particularly benevolent towards Zeus. He has referred to Heracles, already *σωθείς ὑπ' αὐτοῦ*, as *ἐχθροῦ πατρός μοι τοῦτο φίλτατον τέκνον* (333). He is even less likely now to respond to demands from Hermes than when he was in fetters. But clearly some new character has got to appear. Much the most attractive hypothesis, I think, is that it is Thetis herself, fleeing from Zeus' embraces. This was suggested by Fitton-Brown, *JHS* lxxix (1959) 57, who pointed out that the scholiast on *PV* 167 says of Zeus and Thetis *οὗτος γὰρ ἐρασθεὶς αὐτῆς ἐδίωκεν αὐτὴν ἐν τῷ Καυκάσῳ ὄρει ὅπως συγγένηται αὐτῇ, ἐκωλύθη δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ Προμηθέως εἰπόντος αὐτῷ ὅτι ὁ μέλλων γεννηθῆναι ἐξ αὐτῆς ἔσται κρείττων κατὰ πολὺ τοῦ ἰδίου πατρός*. (Cf. Nonn. *D.* xxxiii 355–69.) Of all the sources for the story that an ancient commentator on *Desm.* may have had to hand, *Lg.* was surely the nearest. Fitton-Brown assumed that Prometheus was still bound and had to give up his secret now because once Zeus actually took Thetis, it would have no further value. But that is not a convincing motivation for Prometheus, who can expect to be released anyway if Zeus falls from power. It is more plausible that he should speak out (a) to honour a prior undertaking to Heracles and (b), when the time comes, to save Thetis. For the dramatic presentation of an amorous pursuit the poet had a model in Aeschylus' *Supplikes*. The singing actor who had been Io in *Desm.* would now appear as Thetis, voicing her distress in lyrics much as before. In terms of composition, the Thetis scene may have been prior to the Io scene. After some dialogue between Thetis and Prometheus, Hermes would arrive, imperious as the Egyptian herald in *Supplikes*, demanding Thetis for Zeus. Prometheus would now at last play his trump, letting out the old oracle about Thetis' child through a passage of stichomythia.

Exit Hermes to report to Zeus. Stasimon. Final scene in which Prometheus receives compensation (cf. *PV* 176), in the form of honours to be paid to him in future by men, in particular at Athens, where regular torch-races will commemorate his bringing of fire.⁸³ It is also laid down that in memory of his bondage he will henceforth wear a crown.⁸⁴ On the Apulian vase-painting mentioned earlier (n. 70), we see this crown being brought to him by Athena, and it is likely enough that it was she who came in this closing scene to announce his reward.

As for Thetis—the other female figure on the vase?—it is decreed that she shall marry Peleus: her son shall be mightier than his father indeed, a glorious hero, but not mightier than Zeus, whose regime is now secure for ever. The Titans will return to the Isles of the Blest, never to be seen on earth again. *Exeunt omnes*, Athena perhaps by air to Olympus, the Titans celebrating the power and wisdom of Zeus in their final anapaests.

So much for the probable action of the play. But there is still a good deal to be said about Heracles' travels and how the poet's idea of them relates to tradition.

As Erytheia was located beyond Ocean from at least the eighth century, Heracles' journey there—and his journey to the Hesperides, when that became an independent story—provided poets and prose writers who wished to compile connected accounts of his adventures with an all-embracing frame in which to set any exploits that lay outside the ordinary Greek orbit. Thus those Pontic Greeks who traced the Scythian peoples back to a union between Heracles and Echidna (*Hdt.* iv 8–10) said that he met her on his way back from the land of Geryones, only they

invention; Strabo quotes the original verses, and they say not a word about the cattle. Heracles may have returned through Africa, or the poet may have said nothing about his return route, having already dealt with all other sectors of the earth in connexion with Io and the Titans.

⁸³ Cf. *Hyg. astr.* ii 15 p. 53. 10–16 Bunte. On the Attic Promethia see Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States* v 378 ff.; Wilamowitz, *Aisch. Int.* 142–4; Deubner, *Attische Feste* 211 f.; Kraus, *RE* xxiii 654 f.

⁸⁴ *Ath.* 674d=fr. 334. Cf. 'Prob.' on *Virg. Ec.* vi 42, *Hyg. Astr.* ii 15 p. 54. 15–18. Athenaeus and Hyginus treat this as the aition for festive wreaths in general. Athenaeus has earlier quoted a passage of Menodotus (541 F 1)

according to which Prometheus' wreath was of withy, and so perhaps in Aeschylus' *Sphinx* fr. 181. Artistic representations show him with a diadem or a wreath of bay or willow even before his release: Eckhard, *RE* xxiii 707 f., 712, 719 f. *Apollod.* ii 5.11.10 says (Heracles) *τὸν Προμηθέα ἔλυσε, δεσμὸν ἐλόμενος τὸν τῆς ἐλαίας*, which seems to be confused. Several authors say also that Prometheus put on an iron finger-ring with a piece of the rock set in it ('Prob.', *Hyg.*; *Plin. HN* xxxiii 8, xxxvii 2), but this is not ascribed to 'Aeschylus', and Hyginus implies that his authority for the ring did not mention the crown.

made this more plausible by placing Geryones *ξέω τοῦ Πόντου*, i.e. somewhere in the north or north-east.⁸⁵ We have seen that Stesichorus had told the tale of the Centaurs' drinking-party, at which Heracles accidentally shot Chiron, in his *Geryoneis*, and perhaps other incidental exploits too.⁸⁶

Of particular relevance to *Ly.* is the detailed narrative of Heracles' peregrinations compiled by an Athenian logographer of the mid fifth century, Pherecydes.⁸⁷ In his second book Pherecydes gave the following account of the hero's quest for the golden apples. Certain 'Nymphs of Zeus and Themis'⁸⁸ dwelling in a cave by the Eridanus showed him where and how to catch Nereus, who, after vainly trying to escape by changing into all kinds of forms, told him the way to the Hesperides. He arrived at Tartessus—almost at his journey's end? No: from there he crossed over to Libya, where he killed Antaios, and continued to Memphis, where he killed Busiris, and to Arabia, where he killed Emathion. Then he went up the Nile, through the mountains of Abyssinia, into the furthest wastes of Africa, clearing it of wild beasts. Reaching Ocean in the far south, he embarked in the Sun's golden cup. Surely now he is about to find the Hesperides? No again: he sails east to the Caucasus, and in response to Prometheus' entreaties kills the eagle that plagues him. He also answers Prometheus' need of a god to die in his place by 'providing' Zeus with Chiron, whom he had shot in an earlier escapade (above p. 142). Prometheus rewards him with a new load of advice about the golden apples. He should go to Atlas, who is located in the far north, and get him to fetch the apples for him while he himself supports the sky. Heracles does this. Atlas tries to leave him permanently holding the sky, but Heracles induces him to take it back, using a ruse taught him by the foresighted Prometheus. He then returns to Mycenae with the apples.

It is obvious that this preposterous concatenation of events is the result of a two-stage expansion from a much simpler story. Twice Heracles seems about to reach the Hesperides, and twice they are withdrawn to a more remote location. In the original story, adapted from Stesichorus,⁸⁹ the Hesperids' isle is near Tartessus. The first expansion removes it (and the journey in the Sun's cup) to the southern Ocean, enabling the African adventures to be brought in; this corresponds to the version of Panyassis, cf. *fr.* 26 (Busiris), 10 (Hesperides located *qua cedunt mediū longe secreta diei*⁹⁰). The second expansion, no doubt due to Pherecydes himself, brings in Prometheus and Atlas, and transfers the Hesperids to the far north, because Atlas is now located under the Pole about which the stars revolve.⁹¹ Heracles no longer has to cross to the Hesperids' isle himself or kill the serpent, because Atlas gets the apples for him.

In *Ly.* as in Pherecydes, the traditional eagle-shooting is placed in the context of the journey to the Hesperides, in despite of geography; Prometheus gives Heracles directions; and Chiron is found willing to die in Prometheus' place. It cannot be supposed that these coincidences between two approximately contemporary Athenian publications are fortuitous. I cannot see anything to be said for postulating yet a third work containing these details as a common source. It is after all likely that the Prometheus poet, with his encyclopaedic interest in mythology, had direct knowledge of Pherecydes' work if it was published first, or, if not, that Pherecydes was present when the trilogy was performed. In short, one surely drew upon the other. Which upon which?

I do not think certainty is attainable, but a number of considerations can be adduced in favour of the priority of Pherecydes.

(i) The common features in question reflect the approach of a mythographer, of someone who strings myths together in a continuous narrative. Heracles' visit to Prometheus is seen as part of the story of a particular Labour; and Prometheus' exchange of death with Chiron, with whom he

⁸⁵ It seems to be Herodotus who attaches the conventional location by Cadiz.

⁸⁶ Vürtheim, *Stesichoros' Fragmente u. Biographie* 20, goes much too far in inferring that the poem was 'eine ganze Heraklea' in which 'sämtliche Taten des Herakles werden vor Augen geführt'.

⁸⁷ 3 F 16–17, 75–6, 7 ~ Apollod. ii 5.11.

⁸⁸ Zeus and Themis are the parents of the Horai and Moirai in Hes. *Th.* 901–6.

⁸⁹ For Nereus see Paradox. Vat. 33 p. 110 Keller (omit-

ted by Page) *παρ' Ὀμήρω Πρωτεύς εἰς πάντα μετεμορφούτο, καθὰ Θέτις παρὰ Πινδάρω καὶ Νηρείς παρὰ Στρησιχόρω καὶ Μήστρα*. The episode is shown on vases from the early sixth century.

⁹⁰ Avien. ii 179, 'where the unknown South retreats', never allowing the traveller to find its limits. Not understood by V. Matthews, *Panyassis of Halikarnassos* 70.

⁹¹ Cf. *Pirith.* TrGF 43 F 3. 5 (the two Bears τὸν Ἀτλάντειον τηρούσι πόλον); Eur. *HF* 403 οὐρανοῦ θ' ὑπὸ μέσσαν . . . ἔδραν.

has no other connexion, is the invention of a storyteller whose Heracles narrative encompassed both Pholos' party and Prometheus' liberation.

(ii) To make Heracles encounter Prometheus on his way to the Hesperides was more natural for Pherecydes, whose Heracles is coming from the far south and heading for the far north, than for the tragedian, who has him heading for the far west and would have had to invent *ad hoc* an explanation of his presence in Scythia.

(iii) The advice which Heracles receives from Prometheus in Pherecydes concerns the method of getting the apples and tricking Atlas, and is thus in keeping with Prometheus' essential nature as the clever, foresighted one. In *Ly.*, so far as we can see, Prometheus merely functions as an oracle and has no practical devices to impart. It is unlikely that the tricking of Atlas appeared, since Atlas is represented as Prometheus' brother by whose fate he is deeply grieved (*PV* 347–50).

Pherecydes' *floruit* is given by Eusebius as 456/5; Jacoby writes 'der ionische Dialekt . . . weist ihn doch wohl vor den Peloponnesischen Krieg'. I would advance two reasons for thinking that the part of his work that concerns us was composed after the date given by Eusebius. The first is to do with the ruse by which Heracles gets Atlas to take the sky back again: he asks him just to take it for a moment while he arranges a *σπίρα*, a carrying-pad, on his head. As a specimen of Greek trickery this does not strike us as very inspired; only an imbecile would have been taken in by it. I suspect that it is an autoschediasm of Pherecydes', and that the pad was suggested to him by that metope of the temple of Zeus at Olympia, completed in time for the games of 456, which shows Atlas bringing the apples to Heracles, who stands supporting the sky with the help of a large pad or bolster.⁹² The sculptor evidently knew the version of the Hesperides story that Pherecydes followed, in so far as it is Atlas who fetches the apples, but he does not know Pherecydes' story of Atlas' attempt to remain free and Heracles' trick, for Atlas is offering him the apples in an eager and helpful manner,⁹³ and Heracles is already using a pad. The new temple and its sculptures must have been scrutinized with interest by every visitor to the Olympic games in 456, 452 and subsequently. There are few works of art outside Athens that Pherecydes is more likely to have examined.

My second reason is that Pherecydes' account of Heracles' progress towards the Hesperides appears, as we have seen, to be built upon Panyassis'. Panyassis probably died in the 450s.⁹⁴ His *Heracleia* may have been completed some time before. But an epic by a Halicarnassian noble which never achieved real popularity would not automatically become widely known across the Aegean within a few years. Who brought it to Athens? Who more likely than the poet's cousin (or nephew) Herodotus, likewise a man of letters, banished by the same tyrant, and known to have been in Athens around 445?⁹⁵ If so, Pherecydes' Book ii is not earlier than the 440s.

THE DATE OF THE TRILOGY

The results of the various stylistic, metrical and dramaturgical studies of *Desm.* assembled by Griffith strongly suggest that it belongs to a stage in the development of Attic tragedy which was not reached for a decade or two after Aeschylus' death. In many respects it has more in common with the techniques of extant Sophocles and Euripides than with those of Aeschylus. It would be hazardous to base a dating on such observations alone, even though a large number of separate criteria point in the same direction. But other considerations lead to a dating fully consistent with them.

A *terminus ante quem* of 430 is given by Cratinus' *Ploutoi*, probably produced at the Lenaia in 429 (n. 65).

The poet was something of a polymath, with an interest in mythology of the synoptic kind as represented by Hesiodic poetry and the logographers, and in geography, ethnography, and the

⁹² Illustrated e.g. in H.-V. Herrmann, *Olympia* pl. 57; Boardman, *Greek Art* 120.

⁹³ Similarly on a white-ground lekythos by the Athena Painter, Athens 1132: E. Haspels, *Attic Black-Figure Lekythoi* pl. 47.3; Boardman, *Athenian Black Figure Vases* fig. 252.

⁹⁴ See Matthews, *op. cit.* 12–19, with my qualifications in *CPh* lxxi (1976) 172–4.

⁹⁵ For this visit see Jacoby, *RE* Suppl. ii 226–9, 233–42, 247. Lygdamis' tyranny belongs to the 450s (Matthews 16 f.), and Herodotus was in Halicarnassus for a time after its fall (*Suda*; Jacoby 225).

history of culture. He was well versed in contemporary and older literature. A survey of the authors that are or may be used by him will help to define the *terminus post quem*.

(a) Hesiod. No earlier poet appears so imbued with the *Theogony* and *Works and Days*. They provide him not just with the Prometheus myth, but with the Titanomachy, the oracular Gaia, the figures of Kratos and Bia, and incidental details such as Memory as mother of the Muses (*PV* 461) and the alleviation of human misery by Hope (250).

(b) Aristeas, *Arimaspeia*. See J. D. P. Bolton, *Aristeas of Proconnesus*, 44–64.

(c) Aeschylus. He naturally knows Aeschylus' plays, and imitates some of the more obvious features of his style. He is particularly likely to have been influenced by *Prometheus Pyrkaeus*. This satyr-play appears to have inspired several vase-paintings in the period 440–20, and Beazley suggested that it had recently been revived.⁹⁶

(d) Pindar. The Typhon passage *PV* 351–72 is certainly dependent on *Pyth.* i 15–28 (470 B.C.); the unusual metaphor *ἰπούμενος* in 365 may come from *Ol.* iv 7 (452 B.C.), if not from some parallel passage in a lost poem. *Pyth.* iv 291 (462 B.C.) is our only source apart from *Ly.* for Zeus' release of the Titans collectively. The myth of the prophecy about Thetis comes from *Isth.* viii 26 ff. (478 B.C.) or from some epic which Pindar has closely followed.⁹⁷

(e) Protagoras. The poet's picture of the evolution of human civilization, with the gift of fire by Prometheus leading to the growth of arts and crafts (*PV* 110, 254, 442 ff.), is most closely paralleled in the myth that Plato puts in the mouth of Protagoras (*Prot.* 320 c ff., 321d), which is generally agreed to follow the lines of Protagoras' own work *περὶ τῆς ἐν ἀρχῇ καταστάσεως*.⁹⁸ Accounts of man's progress from a beastlike condition and of his development of technical skills appear in several tragedians and other writers from the second half of the fifth century and nowhere earlier.⁹⁹ It is likely that this conception originated in a particular sophist's account—Protagoras'. If we may trust the indications in Plato's dialogue, Protagoras visited Athens for the first time in the 440s (or late 450s) and for the second time c. 433.¹⁰⁰ The second date is too late to account for the *Antigone* chorus. If our premises are correct, then, Protagoras promulgated his Prometheus culture-myth at Athens sometime between 452 and 442.

(f) Pherecydes of Athens. See above. This is another source that seems to bring us down to the 440s.

(g) Sophocles. Many parallels of expression have been noted between *Desm.* and Sophocles.¹⁰¹ They are particularly frequent in *Ajax* and *Antigone*, suggesting that the Prometheus trilogy may be near in date to those plays. Of course, for any given instance there may have been many more parallels in lost plays; but that consideration does not alter the significance of the concentration of instances, within the extant Sophoclean plays, in two which are generally regarded as close to each other in date. In no case is it possible to demonstrate that one passage is directly inspired by the other. There are, however, four cases where it seems to me that Sophocles uses a phrase in a more natural and spontaneous way than the Prometheus poet, and none of a contrary kind.

Tr. 1095 ἵπποβάμονα στρατόν ~ *PV* 804 f. στρατόν . . . ἵπποβάμονα. In Sophocles of the Centaurs who *walk as* horses, in *PV* of the Arimaspoi who *ride on* horses.

Aj. 227 οἶμοι φοβούμαι τὸ προσέρπον ~ *PV* 127 πᾶν μοι φοβερὸν τὸ προσέρπον.

Aj. 447 f. κεί μὴ τόδ' ὄμμα καὶ φρένες διάστροφοι / γνώμης ἀπήξαν τῆς ἐμῆς ~ *PV* 673 f. εὐθὺς δὲ μορφὴ καὶ φρένες διάστροφοι / ἦσαν. Less natural as a predicate.

Ant. 492 λυσσῶσαν . . . οὐδ' ἐπήβολον φρενῶν ~ *PV* 443 f. νηπίους ὄντας τὸ πρίν / ἔννοος ἔθηκα καὶ φρενῶν ἐπηβόλους. An odd sense for the phrase.

One may say that this is merely evidence of Sophocles' superiority as a poet; but I submit that it creates a presumption that, if the Prometheus trilogy is close in date to *Ajax* and *Antigone* and shares phraseology with them for that reason, the priority belongs to Sophocles. *Antigone* is

⁹⁶ *AJA* xliii (1939) 618 f.; xlv (1940) 212. Cf. F. Brommer, *Satyrspiele*² 45–9.

⁹⁷ Weil, *op. cit.* 75; Wilamowitz, *Aisch. Int.* 133.

⁹⁸ See Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy* iii 63 ff.

⁹⁹ *Soph. Ant.* 332 ff.; *Eur. Supp.* 201–13, *Crit. F* 19, etc.; Guthrie iii 79 ff.; Dodds, *The Ancient Concept of Progress* 7 ff. The twentieth Homeric Hymn is undated,

but probably of the same period.

¹⁰⁰ 310e: Hippocrates was a child the first time, and is still νεώτερος, whereas Socrates was old enough to have become acquainted with him the first time.

¹⁰¹ Aly, *RhM* lxxviii (1913) 539 n. 1; Schmid 17 f.; Groeneboom on *PV* 644; Griffith 296 n. 13.

datable to 442 or 441, *Ajax* is usually put not long before it. *Trachiniae* is now thought by many to be earlier still.

A dating of the Prometheus trilogy shortly after *Antigone* would fit perfectly with the inferences previously drawn regarding the poet's use of Protagoras and Pherecydes. It will also be recalled that earlier an entirely separate line of reasoning, from the form of the theatre presupposed by *Desm.*, led to the conclusion that it could hardly have been conceived as it stands except in the transitional period between c. 445 and c. 435.

In conclusion, I will point out that there may have been a particular stimulus to compose a Prometheus trilogy about 440, apart from the interest aroused by Protagoras' theory of civilization. A magnificent new temple of Hephaestus had just been completed above the agora.¹⁰² There must have been a dedication ceremony at which fire was kindled on the altar for the first time—holy fire specially brought from a pure source, another altar, by runners. The occasion called for a torch-race. Such races were a feature of several Athenian festivals, and probably already established in the cult of Hephaestus.¹⁰³ At the Promethia the teams lit their torches at Prometheus' altar in the Academia and raced through the Ceramicus to some goal in the city. As Prometheus and Hephaestus are connected in worship in the Academia, and the connexion is reflected in our trilogy—Hephaestus was robbed by Prometheus in *Pyrph.*, felt sympathy for him in *Desm.* because of τὸ συγγενὲς ἢ θ' ὁμιλία, and must have been united in honour with him at the end—it is not unlikely that the runners in the Promethia finished at an altar of Hephaestus, or that at the time of the dedication of the new temple a new race was instituted, or an existing one newly regulated, to bring its holy fire from the old altar of Prometheus.¹⁰⁴ Such an occasion might well give the cue for a revival of Aeschylus' thirty-year-old satyr play *Prometheus Pyrkaeus*, as well as for the composition of a tragic trilogy on the Prometheus story which culminated in the establishment of the Promethia and the striking of the balance between Prometheus and Hephaestus.

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¹⁰² The Hephaesteum is believed to have been begun c. 449 and to have been completed in the late 440s, but an exact date cannot be given.

¹⁰³ See Frazer on Paus. i 30. 2; Deubner, *Attische Feste*

212 f.

¹⁰⁴ Some kind of reorganization of torch-races at the Hephaestia and Great Panathenaea in 421/0 is attested by IG i² 84, but the inscription is not well preserved.